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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 002442

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EWWT](#) [KPAL](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: ABOUL GHEIT CALLS ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL  
"SUCCESSFUL"

REF: A) CAIRO 2438 B) CAIRO 2429

Classified by DCM Matthew Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a November 29 meeting, Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit gave Ambassador his assessment of the recent Arab League ministerial on Palestinian reconciliation. Aboul Gheit stated that overall it was successful, particularly in getting the AL ministers to endorse the view that Abu Mazen's presidency lasted until such time as new elections for both the presidency and parliament could be arranged. The intent of this, the minister said, was to legitimize his staying in office past January 9. Syria objected strenuously to the paragraph in the draft resolution calling for Abu Mazen to stay in office until after both elections and Palestinian reconciliation. Syria, however, was overruled and this was in the final resolution. Syria and Qatar, he said, were "playing the Iranian game" with the Palestinian Islamists. If they had managed to succeed, the damage would have been "very bad," but "we confronted the Syrians and forced it" on them.

¶2. (C) Egypt, Aboul Gheit said, drafted the original resolution and during the meetings was able to prevent the Syrians from establishing an Arab League committee to "help" the PA, give them a mandate, and from establishing a timetable under which the PA would have to report back to the Arab League. Aboul Gheit said that Amr Moussa will not convene a second meeting without Egyptian consent. He commented that the Arab League is "playing into the hands of the Iranians," and that the confrontation, which started with the assassination of Hariri, and continued with the Lebanese war, the coup in Gaza, the continued erosion of Abu Mazen, the attempt to take over the PA and now the attempt to change the name of the PLO to the Palestinian Islamic Liberation Organization, continues.

Haj PILGRIMS FROM GAZA

¶3. (C) When asked about Haj pilgrims traveling to Saudi from Gaza, Aboul Gheit said he didn't know the total number, but that only a small number would cross at Gaza, but that "it has to be done." He said that the agreement is that those Palestinians who have gotten their visas from the Saudi embassy in Cairo will cross at Rafah, and those who have gotten visas from the Saudis in Amman would go via Israel.

ISPS COMPLIANCE VISIT

¶4. (C) The Ambassador reminded him that CODEL Dorgan would be interested in the status of the Coast Guard visit to Egyptian ports and Egyptian compliance with ISPS. Aboul Gheit said he has concluded that "we will be receptive" to the visit but that "we take our time." He asked that the USG "bear with us on this" and that we not push, although we should continue to ask about the status of the request. The Ambassador reminded him that we had been working to gain access for the Coast Guard for two years, and that we hoped to have a response before CODEL Dorgan's arrival.  
SCOBey